283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen [286] or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej bet", described under entertainment, usually employs several woman as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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304 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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302 The hairdresser, "ras säri" is a woman who operates a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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535 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari", musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 852 553 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "G[illegible]-Mikael" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tärəkkäsä" - she has become impure; "räggäma" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädəm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näqänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("ərgus" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "əras" period (usually 80 days) is over. During [304] this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

847 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adär" (discharged dirty part), also called "yaengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wozäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 6th day of the month Ter. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of
[831] her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "ïnta" (from "amänïtä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the
845 539 twin"? The proverb says:

"The mother of twins,

golden red stain obtained from the root of this bulbuous plant which grows wild. This is done by young girls and respectable married women, as well as "unattached women".

Shadowing of eyelids, however, is the specialty of divorcees and "unattached women". It is done by means of antimony ("kull"), mixed in powdered form with vegetable oil, and applied with a simple grass brush (much as in ancient Egypt).

Tattooing ("neqsat") is also a special attraction made use of almost exclusively by divorcees who want to attract another husband; as they themselves say "for beauty's sake". Since it is a mark of beauty to have a long neck, tattooing aims at emphasizing this feature, and a concentric series of necklaces is carefully tattooed on the neck from ear to ear and from the collarbone until part of the way up the cheek. Seven hatched lines of this tattoo can cost as much as Eth$3-4, even in the less expensive provincial towns. The work is done by a professional woman tattooer, and takes several hours. There is pain for about a week thereafter, so that a divorcee usually has it done about two weeks before one of the major holy days in the year which also serve as climaxes of the flirting season, notably Epiphany (Temqat) and Mikael. The freshly applied tattooing will then be noticed as an innovation by men looking over the eligible women, and as conversation piece invite the approach of the male. Tattooing fades, especially on dark skin.

Tattooing of the gums is also popular among divorcees, to heighten the whiteness of the teeth, and is curiously called "ters tequrat" (lit. blackening of the teeth), (also "guramayle"). Unlike neck tattooing, in which the dye used is usually blue, blackening of the gums, between and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker effect,

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828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

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779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("gezrat") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shanqalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sabawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yabaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "mätäb" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit s̈älkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit m̈da") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic. A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[304]

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is
[57½] only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
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157 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
[304] when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so they find it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

in the church, with water which they keep in a vase, and which they bless, and they put oil on the forehead and on the breasts and shoulder-blades. They do not put ointment,[1] nor do they have it, nor the oil of extreme unction. This office of catechism which they celebrate seems to me to be much the same form as the Roman, and at the time of pouring the water on the child they do it in this way. One who is the godfather takes the child from the hands of the woman that has it and raises it, holding it under the arms, and holds it suspended; and the priest who baptizes, with one hand holds the vase and pours the water over the child, and with the other washes it all over, saying in his language the words which we say, that is: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. They always perform this office on a Saturday or a Sunday, and it is done in the morning at mass, because every child that receives baptism receives the communion, and they give it in very small quantities, and cause it to be swallowed by means of water. With regard to this, also, I used to tell them that this communion was very dangerous, and in no wise necessary. As I said that they put oil on the forehead, you should know that every child comes to baptism shaved with a razor, and the scars or marks which they bear on the nose, between the eyes, and at the corners of the eyes, are not made by fire nor for anything of Christianity, but with cold iron for ornament, and because they say that it is good for the sight. There are here women who are very skilful at making these marks. They make them in this manner: they take a clove of garlic, large and moist, and place it on the corner of the eye; with a sharp knife they cut round the garlic, and then with the fingers widen the cut, and put upon it a little paste of wax, and over the wax another paste of dough, and press it down for one night with a cloth, and there remains for ever a mark which appears like a burn, because their color is dark.

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5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

764 of those departed, which would be vain did they be-
775 lieve they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

● 304 I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predeces-
171 sors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia. 304 171

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula- 304 609

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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304 609 tion, "Blessed is the Lord that hath ordained circumcision!" so that, I believe, their indifference in this article is rather owing to not being contradicted; just as they are careless about every other part of religion, unless such as have been revived in their minds by disputes with the Jesuits, and kept up since, in part, among their clergy. But none of them pretend that circumcision arises from necessity of any kind, or from any obstruction or impediment to procreation, or that it becomes necessary for cleanliness, or from the heat of climate.

304 None of these reasons, constantly alleged in Europe, are ever to be heard of here; nor do I believe they have the smallest foundation any where: and this, I think, should weigh strongly in favour of the account Scripture gives of it. Examining the origin of this ceremony, independent of this revelation, I will never believe that man, or nations of men, rashly submitted to a disgraceful, sometimes dangerous, and always painful operation, unless there had been proposed, as a consequence, some reward for submitting to, or some punishment for refusing it, which balanced in their minds the pain and danger, as well as disgrace, of that operation.

All the inhabitants of the globe agree in considering it shameful to expose that part of their body, even to men; and in the East, where, from climate, you are allowed, and, from respect to your superiors, the generality of men are forced to go naked, all agree in covering their waist, which is called their *nakedness*, though it is really the only part of their body that is covered. We see even that there a curse * at-

* Gen. chap. ix. ver. 22.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

tended the mere seeing that part of the body of a pa- 304
rent, and not instantly throwing a covering over it.

I do not propose discussing at large the arguments for or against the time of the beginning to circumcise. The Scripture has given such an account of it, that, when weighed with the promise so exactly kept to the end, seems to me to be a very rational one. But, considering all revelation out of the question, I think there is no room to institute any free or fair inquiry. I give no pre-eminence to Moses, nor his writings. I suppose him a profane author; but, till those that argue against his account, and maintain circumcision was earlier than Abraham, shall shew me another profane writer as old as Moses, as near the time they say it began as Moses was to the time of Abraham, I will not argue with them in support of Moses against Herodotus, nor discuss who Herodotus's Phenicians, and who his Egyptians were, that circumcised. Herodotus knew not Abraham nor Moses, and, compared to their days, he is but as yesterday. Those Phenicians and Egyptians might, for any thing he knew at his time, have received circumcision from Abraham or Ishmael, or some of their posterity, as the Abyssinians or Ethiopians, whom he refers to, actually say they did, which Herodotus did not know, it is plain, though he mentions they were circumcised. This tradition of the Abyssinians merits some consideration from what they say of it themselves, that they were, in the earliest time, circumcised before they left their native country, and settled in Tigre. From this they derive no honour, nor do they pretend to any. It would have been otherwise, if the era fixed upon had been the reign of Menilek, son of Solomon, when they first embraced Judaism under a monarch. This would have made a much more brilliant epoch in their history, whilst it was probable, that they adopted circumcision under

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 304 the countenance of Azarias, the son of Zadok, the high priest, and the representatives of the twelve tribes who came with him at that time from Jerusalem.

304 171 It seems to me very extraordinary, that, if circumcision was originally a Jewish invention, all those nations to the south should be absolutely ignorant of it, while others to the northward were so early acquainted with it; for none of those nations upon the Nile (excepting the Shepherds), either know or practise it to this day; though, ever since the 1400th year before Christ, they have been in the closest connection with the Jews. This would rather make me believe, that the rite of circumcision went northward from the plain of Mamre; for it certainly made no progress southward from Egypt. We see it obtained in Arabia, by Zipporah *, Moses's wife, circumcising her son upon their return to Egypt. Her great anxiety to have that operation immediately performed, shews that her's was a Judaical circumcision; there was no sin that attended the omission of this operation in Egypt; but God had said to Abraham †, "The soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel."

The Tcheratz Agows, who live between Lasta and Begemder, in an exceedingly fertile country, are not circumcised; and, therefore, if this nation left Palestine upon Joshua passing Jordan, circumcision was not known there; for the Agows, to this day, are uncircumcised. The same may be said of the Agows of Damot, who are settled at the head of the Nile. It will be seen by the two specimens of their different languages, that they are different nations, as I have alleged. Next to these are the Gafat, in a plain open country, who do not use circumcision; none of them

* Exod. chap. iv. ver. 25.
† Gen. chap. xvii. ver. 14.

5: Bruce-T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

were ever converted to Judaism, and but few of them to Christianity. The next are the people of Amhara, who did not use circumcision, at least few of them, till after the massacre of the princes by Judith, in the year 900, when the remaining princes of the line of Solomon fled to Shoa, and the court was established there. The last of these nations that I shall mention are the Galla, who are not circumcised; of this nation we have said enough.

On the north, a black, woolly-headed nation, called the Shangalla, already often mentioned, bounds Abyssinia, and serves like a string to the bow made by these nations of the Galla. Who they are we know perfectly, being the Cushite Troglodytes of Sofala, Saba, Axum, and Meroe; shut up, as I have already mentioned, in those caves, the first habitations of their more polished ancestors. Neither do these circumcise, though they immediately bordered upon Egypt; while the Cushite, adjoining to the peninsula of Africa, certainly did. As, then, so many nations contiguous to Egypt never received circumcision from it, it seems an invincible argument, that this was no endemial rite or custom among the Egyptians, and, I have before observed, that it was of no use to this nation; as the reasons mentioned by Philo, and the rest, of cleanliness and climate, are absolute dreams, and now exploded; and that they are so is plain, because, otherwise, the nations more to the southward would have adopted it, as they have universally done another custom, which I shall presently speak of.

Circumcision, then, having no natural cause or advantage, being in itself repugnant to man's nature, and extremely painful, if not dangerous, it could never originate in man's mind wantonly and out of free-will. It might have done so indeed from imitation; but with Abraham it had a cause, as God was to make his

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 171 private family in a few years numerous like the sand of the sea. This mark, which separated them from all the world, was an easy way to shew whether the promise was fulfilled or not. They were going to take possession of a land where circumcision was not known; and this shewed them their enemy distinct from their own people. And it would be the grossest absurdity to send Samson to bring, as tokens of the slain, so many foreskins, or prepuces, of the Philistines, if, as Herodotus says, the Philistines had cut off their prepuces a thousand years before.

304 I must here take notice, that this custom, filthy and barbarous as it is, has been adopted by the Abyssinians of Tigre, who have always been circumcised, from a knowledge that the nations about them were not circumcised at all. It is true they do not content themselves with the foreskin, and I doubt very much if this was not the case with the Jews likewise. On the contrary, in place of the foreskin, they cut the whole away, scrotum and all, and bring this to their superiors, as a token they have killed an enemy.

Although it then appears, that the nations which had Egypt between Abraham and them, that is, were to the southward, did not follow the Egyptians in the rite of circumcision; yet in another, that of excision, they all concurred. Strabo * says, the Egyptians circumcised both men and women, like the Jews. I will not pretend to say that any such operation ever did obtain among the Jewish women, as Scripture is silent upon it; and, indeed, it is nowhere ever pretended to have been a religious rite, but to be introduced from necessity, to avoid a deformity which nature has sub-

* Lib. xvii. p. 950.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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jected particular people to, in particular climates and countries.

We perceive among the brutes, that Nature, creating the animal with the same limbs, or members, all the world over, does yet indulge itself in a variety, in the proportion of such limbs or members. Some are remarkable for the size of their heads, some for the breadth and bigness of the tail, some for the length of their legs, and some for the size of their horns*. There is a district in Abyssinia, within the perpetual rains, where cows, of no greater size than ours, have horns, each of which would contain as much water as the ordinary water-pail used in England does; and I remember, on the frontiers of Sennaar, near the river Dender, to have seen a herd of many hundred cows, every one of which had the apparent construction of their parts almost similar with that of the bull; so that, for a considerable time, I was persuaded that these were oxen, their udders being very small, until I had seen them milked.

This particular appearance, or unnecessary appendage, at first made me believe that I had found the real cause of circumcision from analogy; but, upon information, this did not hold. It is, however, otherwise in the excision of women. From climate, or some other cause, a certain disproportion is found generally to prevail among them. And, as the population of a country has, in every age, been considered as an object worthy of attention, men have endeavoured to remedy this deformity by the amputation of that redundancy. All the Egyptians, therefore, the Arabians, and nations to the south of Africa, the Abyssinians, Gallas, Agows, Gafats, and Gongas, make

* Some of these large horns are in Mr Bruce's collection of natural history, &c., at Kinnaird. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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304 their children undergo this operation, at no fixed time indeed, but always before they are marriageable.

When the Roman Catholic priests first settled in Egypt, they did not neglect supporting their mission by temporal advantages, and small presents given to needy people, their proselytes; but mistaking this excision of the Coptish women for a ceremony performed upon Judaical principles, they forbade, upon pain of excommunication, that excision should be performed upon the children of parents who had become Catholics. The converts obeyed, the children grew up, and arrived at puberty; but the consequences of having obeyed the interdict were, that the man found, by choosing a wife among Catholic Cophts, he subjected himself to a very disagreeable inconveniency, to which he had conceived an unconquerable aversion; and therefore he married a heretical wife, free from this objection, and with her he relapsed into heresy.

The missionaries, therefore, finding it impossible that ever their congregation could increase, and that this accident frustrated their labours, laid their case before the college of Cardinals *de propaganda fide*, at Rome. These took it up as a matter of moment, which it really was, and sent over visitors skilled in surgery, fairly to report upon the case as it stood. They, on their return, declared, that the heat of the climate, or some other natural cause, did, in that particular nation, invariably alter the formation, so as to make a difference from what was ordinary in the sex in other countries; and that this difference did occasion a disgust, which must impede the consequences for which matrimony was instituted. The college, upon this report, ordered that a declaration, being first made by the patient and her parents, that it was not done from Judaical intention, but because it disappointed the ends of marriage, "Si modo matrimonii fructus impediret id omnino tollendum esset:" that

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *. 304

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains. 304 765

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year." 805

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

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* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The those who are sick, or dying. 794

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar. 292

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment. 796 784 [846] [94] [304] [852]

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Teluma; 131 361 101

[p. 57]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position.

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion.

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries.

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite.

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace.

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*,

wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic tattoos, and although she also performs purely decorative works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda basiyta). She pur-

chases more exotic ingredients from an herbalist (in this transaction, acting as medhaniyt korac) who is known to treat the relevant ailment. Medicaments are mixed with the tokwariy's ink for all instances of therapeutic tattooing. The decision to include medicaments in prophylactic tattooing reflects the tokwariy's alternative strategies. In the first of these, the tattooing aims to drive away the pathogenic agent, by a combination of designs. These designs are associated with the pathogen in "conventional" or pragmatic terms only; the medicaments used in tattooing are derived from herbalist therapies in which the medicament assisted in expelling the pathogen from the sickman. The second strategy is directed against purposive agents, those responsible for yisow ayn and yibuda bəziyta (discussed in chapter one). Here no medicaments are used, and the designs aim to distract the agent's attention and his disease-causing eye from vulnerable areas of the potential victim's body, particularly away from his mouth. Children under ten are rarely tattooed, but are protected from these agents by bizarre haircuts (for example, three asymmetrically arranged patches of hair on an otherwise shaven skull, or a single patch on the brow), likewise intended to draw attention to less vulnerable body areas.

A variety of motifs are utilized by the tokwariy, necklaces of "beads", geometric decorations, crosses, and

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their godfather's names as well as their own (which incorporates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

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Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.

TABLE 5

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THE TOKWARIY'S PRACTICE

Area Tattooed	Function		
	Prophylactic	Therapeutic	Decorative
forehead (female only)			exclusive
gums	e,f	f	present
throat (female only)	a		present
breasts (female only)			exclusive
upper arm (male only)	g	g	present
forearm	b,c*,d*	b	present
back of hand	b,c*,d*	b	present
shin to ankle (female only)	b,c*,d*	b	present

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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TABLE 5 CONTINUED

Key

a: Inkert: goiter

b: Kurtimat: rheumatoid pain

c: Yisow Ayn: an ailment characterized by lassitude, nausea, headache, vomiting, bloody stools; in young children, the syndrome includes the eating of ashes, mud, and charcoal.

d: Yibuda Basiyta: buda possession

e: Yiters Himem: toothache

f: Yiters Kurtimat: chronic pain in teeth and adjacent jaw

g: Ayni Tila: an ailment characterized by irresolution in the presence of others; the sickman experiences impotency, an inability to reply coherently to questions, forgetfulness, and "free-floating" anxiety.

•: Medicaments are not mixed with ink.

*755 *756 breached. Thus, the information it provides regarding *793 pathogenesis is equally relevant and detailed for pre- *[789] [539] scribing prophylaxis, as it is for selecting therapy. The secular healer, in contrast, is unequipped to prescribe prophylaxis, except for the inconclusive and preliminary indications given by the hilimefoc. In addition [751] to prescribing prophylaxes, the debtera provides protective kitabs for a great variety of medical contingencies. Among secular healers, only the tokwariy (tattooist) is [304] [951] able to perform prophylactic works, and these provide very imperfect protection against only a small number of ailments.

*755 *756 *757 *759 *793 Laymen assess differences between their own medical procedures and those of debtera-healers most precisely with regards to the preparation and administration of therapy. Most details regarding the preparation and administration of the debtera's medical works are unavailable, directly at least, to the layman. In these areas, he perceives the debtera's medical works by means of a series of semblances, linking the "asmat" (magic) which appear in secular therapies with the esoteric activities the debtera is known or assumed to perform in his own * *[278] *[787] therapies. Among the important "asmat" of secular therapies are the use of prescribed instruments for gathering and processing of medicaments, the special condition of the gatherer, the numerological content of pharmacology